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## Focal Points

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### A Symposium of Particular Objects Some of Our Supervisors are Seeking to Accomplish this Year.

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I. MARY M. CONWAY, New Orleans, Louisiana.

To make my point clear as to "what I consider the most important feature in my work this year" it is necessary to go into a bit of history. Music as a branch of the curriculum tree put forth a tiny shoot about eighteen years ago in New Orleans; it was fostered by the provision in the will of the eccentric (?) millionaire McDonogh, who bequeathed his wealth to public education with the condition that the children should be taught singing; and protected from the storms of adverse criticism by a music-loving superintendent of schools.

The mistake was made here, as in all other places at this time, of substituting the dead symbols of music for the living pulsing thing itself; the outward form was preserved and the lovely soul fled to a better land.

So, the most important feature of my work this year and the past year and the year before that, is, and was, to woo back the truant spirit to the old city that has a richer musical heritage than any other in America.

In addition to this I have many plans suggested by the rich opportunities for observation of practical things offered in the Minneapolis conference. The first and most enthusiastically received so far is the competitive chorus idea, the chorus to be led by the grade teacher (not the supervisor) thereby giving the

credit of success where it properly belongs, to the earnest, splendid women who do the daily work with the children.

We are going to sing cantatas and operettas, develop our orchestras, have artists' recitals for our High School boys and girls, and do all we can to alter the old standard of things; but all the work of other years will not be lost, because we are going to offer competitive bouts in sight-reading also; thus preserving the "unities". In appreciation, we are trying to make of the children the kind of musicians that George Fitch facetiously defines as "a man who says "ouch" whenever he hears popular music".

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II. ELSIE M. SHAW, St. Paul, Minn.

You have asked for a few words on,—“What I consider the most important feature in my work this year.”

I believe, the answer is,—Song Interpretation. St. Paul has been blessed with educational conventions this year and having entertained the National Education Association in July, we are now preparing for the Minnesota Educational Association which meets in St. Paul the latter part of October.

I began my year's work, as usual, by testing the voices of the pupils in Grades 6, 7, 8 and assigning them to the various voice parts. Children's choruses are to sing at two of the

general sessions of the Minnesota Educational Association, and for one session, the chorus will be composed of 450 selected voices, from 33 of our Public schools.

The musical numbers consist of three-part unaccompanied songs, and these songs are being studied by all the Seventh Grade pupils of the St. Paul Public Schools. The Grade teacher is selecting the most capable trios from her room, and these selected pupils, will have three general rehearsals under my direction.

In working with children I get the best results by using the text for the sole basis of interpretation; Variety of tone color, nuance, dynamic effects etc., I can get by suggestions of various kinds, which invariably come from the text. To quote from W. J. Henderson, "The object of vocal technic is the vitalization of the text by musical tone and the creation of the tone must be for that purpose and that alone."

The keynote of the second general session at which a children's chorus will sing is—"Patriotism, Prosperity, Peace", and one of the songs I have selected for that occasion is that magnificent song by Grieg, which is set to words called a "Psalm of Peace". This will be sung by a chorus of 375 children.

Later, in the school year, the Public School children will give a program before the Schubert Club of St. Paul. This is the oldest and strongest musical organization in the city and has a membership of more than 1,000. We consider it an honor to be invited to give an entire program, when the year's prospectus announces such artists as Julia Culp, Katherine Goodson, DeGogorza and the Barrere Ensemble.

### III. WM. B. KINNEAR, Larned, Kansas.

In the capital of Pawnee county, "the banner wheat county of Kansas, and therefore of the world" (estimated 1914 yield, 7,865,400 bushels), public school music begins its third year (high school, fourth year) under supervision.

Probably in part as a result of school music influence, children enter first grade with increased capacity—fewer monotones. Reading begins in second grade. From this on, a fairly definite theory outline is provided to go with the practical, enough to make practical work intelligent.

Attention is given to correcting inaccuracies of speech, such as answering "three-four time," or "common time" when asked to read the "measure sign;" or giving "B flat" as the "signature" of the F key.

Individual work in the grades is emphasized along with class singing. In high school only chorus singing is studied. The immediate outlook for the year promises best for a girls' chorus, with suitable cantata study as the principal work.

A town chorus is the logical sequel to high school music, and here includes members of the church choirs and others interested, and such high school singers as are qualified and care for it. Principal chorus works attempted thus far: Gaul's "Ruth," Cowen's "Rose Maiden," selections from "Messiah" and "Creation," solo parts and all (from necessity) given entirely by local talent. This feature will continue and expand.

No school orchestra yet. The town has entered the "boy band" stage,

but strings for orchestra are not in evidence.

Summary: The year's work will emphasize balancing of practice and theory. In grades, development through individual effort as well as class singing. Directing high school attention to suitable choral compositions of the cantata and oratorio type rather than exclusive programs of miscellaneous disconnected selections. Through town chorus, carrying the school work into an improved musical community interest.

#### IV. IRENE CURTIS, Superior, Wis.

A great many people in our community lack enthusiasm for the best in music. This absence of appreciation is due, no doubt, to the fact that we are so far away from musical centers that the opportunity to hear the artists is not offered frequently to the general public. So long has this condition prevailed that the general attitude toward classic productions is like that of the wag who defined a fugue as "a piece of music in which one voice after another comes in, and one listener after another goes out." Very naturally, then, many students come to us with little musical background. I am sure that I am not overestimating the matter when I say that at a Chicago Symphony Concert given recently, ninety per cent of the students who attended were hearing good orchestra music for the first time, and many were hearing their first good music of any kind.

For this reason, in addition to our regular course in music, our aim for this year is to give our students every possible opportunity to hear good music—with the hope that, as their appreciation grows, they will turn

with added interest to their own preparation as teachers of music in the public schools. At the present time we see four lines along which we can work. In the first place, we are fortunate in having some excellent musicians in our city. As often as possible these artists will play and sing for our students, giving such preliminary talks as they think necessary in order that the compositions will be better understood. In addition to this we are going to have a phonograph hour. Three days a week, at a different period each day, all who have not recitations and who wish to hear the records will come into the assembly room. At first this is to be purely listening to the different records. Gradually different points will be brought out until a real course in appreciation is established. Finally, the pupils will have a chance to react to all of this receptive work through the chorus practice, where careful choice of material will be a special factor.

#### V. C. H. MILLER, Lincoln, Neb.

One of the greatest questions now confronting the music educator is that of training children who are destined for a musical career. How can they complete their education in the grade schools without overburdening them physically, and without sacrificing so much of their time to school work at the age when music development must be most vigorously pursued in order to expect a successful musical career?

The high school in many places has already made adequate provision for the music student. Nebraska University now recognizes entrance credits in music to the extent of one

fourth of all the high school credits. If a high school student wants to spend half of his school time on music he can take one more year and still graduate from the high school.

Every musician knows that in order to produce a great artist, we must begin with the child at the age of 5 to 7 and keep him continuously at music. For the first two or three years children should not be required to practice music more than one hour a day, but in the third or fourth year when the child is 8 or 9 years old, more time must be required, increasing in amount as the pupil becomes older and stronger, until in the Seventh and Eighth grades, when the child is 12 to 14 years old, about three hours of practice should be required daily. This is especially true with piano or violin.

The average child is doing as much work as he should do when he carries the regular work as the grade curriculum is now outlined. The only way in which the music and school can both receive proper attention, is to lighten the school work for the music student. Courses of study are being rearranged so freely, and educational values are being shifted so rapidly that now is an opportune time to differentiate the grade school course for the benefit of the ever growing multitude of music students.

The educational value of music is now recognized so generally, that it seems only a matter of justice that music study be substituted for at least one-third of the work that is now regularly required in the grades. Some schools are now trying the experiment of requiring only the forenoon work, leaving the afternoon

for the development of special talent in elective subjects.

It may not be time to go that far yet, but it surely points the way for much needed relief. Some universities now are recognizing entrance credits in any kind of work that is well done, if it has educational value.

This matter of adjusting the plan involves too deeply the general education of the pupil, and the effectiveness of the entire system of education for it to be worked out by a specialist in any line, no matter how eminent. It is the duty of the music teachers who are vitally interested to place before the Superintendents and other school authorities, the great need for such a reform. If we can convince them of the justice of our contention, they may be able to so adjust the program that a certain part of each school day may be available for private music study.

If it could be so arranged that music students beginning at the Fifth grade could substitute private music study for some other subject or subjects so as to enable them to have all or most of the time of the afternoon free, the possibilities for developing fine musicians would be increased manyfold. Moreover the general educational value of music well studied would be far greater for the child than the same time spent upon some subject in which he is not vitally interested.

If this revolution can be accomplished, it will be necessary to place the music teaching upon a systematic basis as to courses of study, methods of teaching, and the manner of certifying the music teacher.

This is such a reasonable reform, that it is sure to come at an early day.

# VI. JULIA E. CLIFFORD, Franklin, N. H.

Ever since I have been teaching (which is two years) I have wondered if there were not magazines of one sort or the other devoted to the interests of school music.

Being situated as I am here, these magazines are a source of inspiration and great help. I shall look forward to another issue with interest, especially, on account of your letter asking for articles on "What I consider the most important feature in my work this year."

Music has been taught here, in this place, for a number of years. I have taken up the work and am finding everything pretty important to look after. Since I came here to teach I have formed a High School Orchestra and a Girls' Glee Club. Both these have done very good work and I am going to work especially hard this year on this feature of my work. Both of these are held outside of school hours and have enlarged each year, so it shows that there is some musical work to be gained from boys and girls that is not required.

My High School Chorus numbers between one hundred and seventy and eighty. But many of the boys and girls are unable to read music readily and some not at all. That is the problem I am up against, and one which has to be handled tactfully as some of these people come from schools where they have not had music and yet can sing. They can not be put out of the chorus. The articles one reads never say anything in regard to such matters. I wish somebody would write something about this matter. I am told it is common in High Schools in the East, at least.

And another thing which has interested and puzzled me is this. Why is it that boys don't like singing as well as girls? Boys come to me and say, they *hate* singing. When they get into a big chorus, they just don't sing much, if any. The time is so short and the time is for chorus work not individual work that the question comes up to me, what can one do? The discipline of my chorus is very good and attention is good,—Is this the fault of the supervisor in having failed to arouse them or just lack of musical appreciation?

# VII. E. L. PHILBROOK, Rock Island, Ill.

"What do I consider the most important feature in my work this year?" This might be answered in one sentence "The adding to my work of some of the Ideas obtained from the Minneapolis Conference."

It was very apparent that the most of those in attendance there learned many new practical things. Frequently they had the satisfaction of seeing plans which they had been following with a feeling of doubt, perhaps, well illustrated and thus confirmed. I think that the conference at Minneapolis did more to bring about greater uniformity of method and efficient application of it than any meeting of the kind ever held. Though many of us were working along the same lines, the elimination of "waste time" was so well illustrated that "efficiency" has become the watch word of all. That meeting has convinced me at least that it will not pay to miss any of the meetings in the future.

One of the things that impressed me most in the work in the Schools there was the almost perfect concen-

tration. This was apparently brought about by the strict application of the method used. It was also evident that every teacher was able to approximate the same results. In a large School system, that is not generally the case unless the method is thoroughly understood and is sufficient unto itself so that the personality of the teacher can be eliminated to a great extent. I have always tried to make "The personal Power of the child to do for himself" the object of my work in the Schools and the ideas set before us at the Conference and papers I have been able to read will make the object much easier to attain, both for the Grade Teachers and myself. The Teaching force I place first for without their hearty co-operation and ability the Supervisors can do very little. The plan of issuing partial reports of the conference in this Bulletin is a step in the right direction. It will have a tendency to keep up the interest in the Conferences for one thing and also to get the Supervisors closer together in methods and plans thereby unifying the work over the United States and raising the standard of music in our Country, a result we are all desirous of obtaining. Here's to a successful year's work for us all and a splendid meeting next Spring!

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VIII. CAROLINE V. SMITH,  
Winona, Minn.

In these days when so much is said about vocational training in the school room, let us pause for a moment, and consider subjects not ordinarily included in a vocational course.

By vocational training we have in

mind bread and butter subjects, that is, a course which will enable a boy to earn a living some day. But is the work-bench the only source of income? It may be true that a vast army of men and women earn their daily bread by doing hard, manual labor, but is this form of work receiving special attention in our school room? We may safely offer a negative answer. The forms of occupation offered in the average manual training course are few in number, and eventually are not included in vocational or professional work. There is no question as to the value of any form of vocational training, but need the earning power of a course be confined to the use of hammer and plane? Is not much valuable clerical work due to the use of the pen? How about the early training of the architect? Has not the class-room pencil and crayon laid the foundation for future success in the architect's office? A fine course in commercial geography has frequently accomplished much in the world of trade. A High School Course in Chemistry and Physics is quite as important as a course in clay work and basketry. A study of the languages is a lasting value, in work shop, commerce, and the fine arts.

And now may we consider for a moment the place of music in the every day world.

From a practical viewpoint music may be considered a vocational subject, quite as much as any other course, for the simple reason that its wage earning power is even greater than are many of the so called manual training subjects. A boy stands just as good a chance of earning his living as a musician as he does in the

vocational field. At any rate, his talent is going to develop along the line of work in which he is most interested.

A boy may become the conductor of an orchestra, band, or chorus. He may also make a reputation for himself as a performer in these organizations. He may gain a wide influence as a teacher upon his chosen instrument, whether it be violin, piano, or pipe organ. In the capacity of church organist he may be ranked among the leaders in the world of music. As a singer upon the concert stage and in grand opera there are also possibilities. The position as music supervisor is growing more and more important. A boy may have a future as a composer, and so deserve honorable mention in doing his share of the world's work.

Art and the artisan often spring from the same source, for it is not unusual to find the cradle of a great man in the cottage. The majority of public school children must no doubt remain content with a very humble place in life, and yet there are boundless possibilities in every social condition, in every occupation, and in every profession. In laying the foundation for a future career, the music supervisor is doing as much towards furthering the interests of a boy as is the director of any other special department. This fact must not be overlooked in discussing the place of music in the school room. Music is not an isolated subject, it is not merely an accomplishment.

The earnest, broadminded man of culture, the successful musician found everywhere in this country, and abroad, is in part a product of the average public school music course.

IX. JAS. L. JOHNSTON, Tempe,  
Arizona.

When one is isolated from those of his fellows who are pursuing work similar to his, he is in a position to more than appreciate any association that may bring him in close personal contact with those who have had abundant opportunity to study and, perhaps, solve problems he has had to face. Working alone he has had to solve them to the best of his ability, from his own experience and such helps as he could obtain from books and magazines. The printed page, while a helpful source of knowledge, often lacks the power and influence of the spoken words coming directly from the lips of the individual enthused with his subject and ripened by experience along his chosen line of endeavor.

To the writer, the Minneapolis Conference brought the opportunity not only of association, but also of congenial companionship and professional helpfulness along school music lines, and although not, strictly speaking, a Supervisor but rather a sort of poor relation—a Normal School music teacher—the National Conference can count upon him on the permanent membership roll and as a booster for its growth in membership and broadening of its field of influence and of usefulness.

And right here, Mr. Editor, may the writer be allowed the suggestion that a little room be spared on future programs for exploiting music work in Normal Schools and treating of the relationship of the work of the Normal School teacher with that of the Supervisor.

Both are working toward the same end but are up against very different conditions, yet are alike in their



search for light that may be derived from the knowledge and experiences of their co-laborers.

The work done by the Minneapolis and St. Paul schools, with the results attained, changed the writer's ideas upon the advisability of beginning sight reading in the earliest grades, and determined him to encourage and emphasize that practice, for by so doing, the standard of required advancement in the grades will be raised, progress facilitated, and a more proficient product in

sight singing and good singing turned over to the High and Normal Schools.

So far, the average of musical ability of students entering the Normal Schools has been too low for us to expect to make them efficient in school music teaching in the time allotted, and they should come to us better prepared to do advanced work.

Verily, the results shown by the Minneapolis and St. Paul schools were an encouragement, a revelation and an inspiration.

## Appreciation of Appreciation

By A. E. WINSHIP, Editor Journal of Education

*(Address before National Conference of Music Supervisors,  
Minneapolis, April 28, 1914.)*

*(Editor's Note: No more stimulating address was given at the Minneapolis meeting than this meaty, epigrammatic contribution which follows. It will repay careful reading, and better still, active endeavor to carry its precepts into practice.)*

Who says that music teaching in the public schools is a fad? The man who would have denounced Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton, Watt, Stephenson and Fulton, Morse, Bell and Marconi as faddists.

Men sitting on the tail of progress and shouting "Whoa" have never for long delayed progress and they signify less today than ever before. They are merely amusing.

Why is it that music is not taught skillfully and artistically in every school and university in the land?

Because people do not appreciate its value. Because standardized educators do not appreciate that knowledge of music is scholastic. Men who pretend to stand for cultural education do not admit that music is even cultural.

The test of education is appreciation. "What a man thinketh in his heart, that is he." A man's life can rise no higher than his aspiration, and his aspiration will be no higher than his appreciation. A man at his highest is the appropriation in realization of his appreciation in idealization.

Appreciation is the real thing while aspiring to the ideal thing. Appreciation is good roads in Minnesota and Kentucky, while aspiring to walk the streets of gold in the new Jerusalem. Appreciation is clean windows and walls in your schoolhouse today while praying for a ticket to see the chalcedony and jasper, emeralds and pearls by and by.

Appreciation is always looking